

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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TAGS: PINT, GR

SUBJECT: AVEROFF INTERVIEW TOUCHES THEMES OF GREEK ARMED
FORCES, NATO AND ANDREAS PAPANDREOU

1. ELEFTEROS COSMOS AUGUST 22 CARRIED SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW
GIVEN BY GREEK MINISTER OF DEFENSE AVEROFF TO ITALIAN
NEWSPAPER IL GIORNALE. INTERVIEW WAS BASED ON QUESTION
AND ANSWER FORMAT.

2. ASKED ABOUT QUESTION CONCERNING NEW CHANGE IN GREEK ARMY
LEADERSHIP AVEROFF CLAIMED IT NATURAL FOR A POLITICAL
GOVERNMENT SUCH AS CURRENT ONE LED BY PM CARAMANLIS TO WISH
ARMED FORCES LEADERSHIP TO BE AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE
CONNECTED WITH FORMER REGIME. WHEN ASKED WHETHER GOG DECISION
TO LEAVE NATO WAS FINAL, AVEROFF ANSWERED WITH A "CATEGORICAL
AFFIRMATIVE." HE EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS A POLITICAL DECISION
IMPELLED BY INTERNATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF A FUNDAMENTAL
CHARACTER. HOWEVER, HE CONCLUDED, SHOULD THE CIRCUMSTANCES
WHICH COMPELLED THE DECISION BE ALTERED COMPLETELY, THEN
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THE DECISION ITSELF MIGHT BE CHANGED

3. WHEN QUERIED WHETHER GREECE'S WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO MIGHT POSE A DANGER FOR GREECE, AVEROFF REPLIED THAT "WHEN HONOR IS AT QUESTION, DANGER IS NOT CONSIDERED." HE THEN REFERRED TO GREECE'S HEROIC STANCE IN 1940 TO BUTTRESS HIS ANSWER

4. FINALLY, AVEROFF WAS ASKED WHETHER THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS FOR ANDREAS PAPANDREOU TO ENTER THE CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT. THE DEFENSE MINISTER REPLIED, "NO" AND CATEGORIZED INTERVIEW IN WHICH PAPANDREOU HAD ACCUSED THE CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT OF BEING A NATO GOVERNMENT -- AS HAVING BEEN A "UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY". WHILE AVEROFF ADMITTED TO HIS INTERVIEWER THAT PART OF HIS RATIONALE FOR SIGNING THE LONDON-ZURICH ACCORDS -- TOGETHER WITH CARAMANLIS -- IN 1959 WAS TO PRESERVE THE POSITION OF NATO IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, NEVERTHELESS "IT IS CERTAINLY ALSO WE -- TOGETHER WITH OTHER POLITICAL FIGURES OF THIS GOVERNMENT -- WHO HAVE NOW DECIDED TO WITHDRAW FROM NATO."
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